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THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

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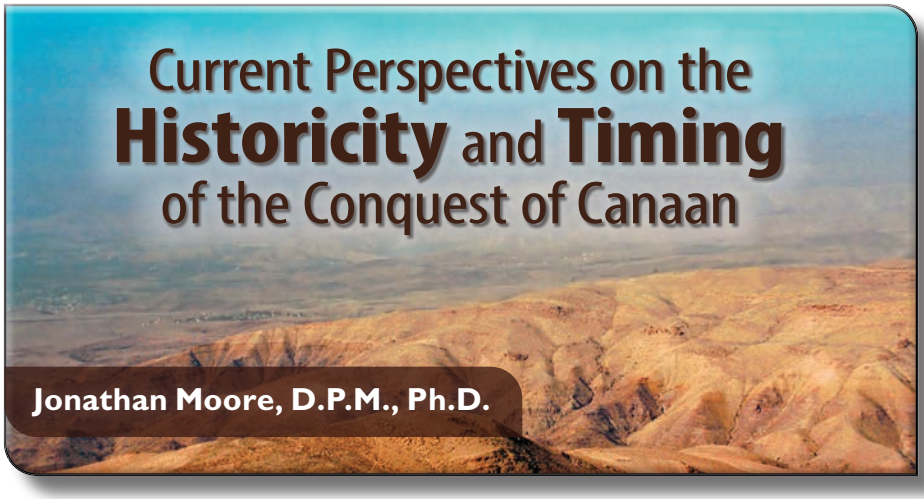
Current Perspectives on the Historicity and Timing of the Conquest of Canaan



Jonathan Moore, D.P.M., Ph.D.

Article In Brief...

The historicity of the biblical Conquest, as presented in the book of Joshua, continues to be challenged by secular archaeologists and scholars, causing many to question the reliability of Scripture. Among the challenges facing those who defend the authenticity of Scripture is that there is allegedly no evidence/documentation for the Conquest outside the Bible. Furthermore, skeptics are quick to point out that the Bible is a religious text, so the Conquest account could have been exaggerated or even invented to support a particular regime or theology. To counter this, Christians can appeal to the ever-growing archaeological evidence in support of the Bible's historical trustworthiness.

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FOR the last century, scholars have been debating Israelite occupation in Canaan with much division over where they came from and how they came to form a nation. As Eliezer D. Oren notes, "The origin of ancient Israel, their settlement in the land of Canaan and transformation into an organized kingdom is one of the most stimulating and, at the same time, most controversial chapters in the history of early Israel."[1]

Stemming back to the turn of this century, marked "revisionism"[2] and biblical skepticism have created a widespread loss of confidence in the historical reliability of the biblical text. These postmodernists claim that there are no real facts, but only interpretations. Modern revisionist scholars have rejected much of the biblical narrative as "too late" to be reliable. In fact, according to these scholars, the Hebrew Bible was entirely a product of the Persian/Hellenistic period. In short, the Hebrew Bible was not composed by eyewitnesses but instead was a late "foundation myth" of a defeated and beset Jewish community in the Hellenistic-Roman era, seeking some sort of self-identity.[3] Among some biblical scholars, the concept of "cultural memory" is becoming popular, noting that, as we do not have reliable sources for writing any real history of events, we must instead rely on how these supposed "events" were remembered—the story or the tradition. This scholarly, nonsensical construct can be illustrated by a theory conjured by Lorenzo Nigro, the latest secular archaeologist who excavated the ancient city of Jericho:

> One may imagine that the terrible destructions suffered by the Canaanite city both in the 3rd and 2nd millennium B.C. had surely become part of the *local shared memory*, and possibly were narrated as the Jerichoans had been able to overcome them almost every time. There is no way, however, to link them directly to the Bible, except for the fact that the biblical author may have reused one of these stories to validate the historicity of his narration.[4]

According to the biblical account, after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites' arrival in the Promised Land marked a pivotal moment for the nation that tested their mettle and faithfulness to God and His instructions. God had explicitly directed Moses and the people to cast out the Canaanite nations and obliterate their idols and areas of worship:

> When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

> then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places; you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess (Numbers 33:51-53).

Although the Israelites successfully overthrew many cities under Joshua's leadership, toward the end of Joshua's life, the Lord told him, "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed" (Joshua 13:1). He then went on to list the regions still under Canaanite control (Joshua 13:2-6). Judges 1:27-35 records the cities that the Israelites had not conquered. Manasseh had neglected to conquer Beth-shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, and Megiddo (Judges 1:27-28). Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites of Gezer (Judges 1:29). Zebulon was still living among the inhabitants of Kitron and Nahalol, using them for labor (Judges 1:30). Asher had not conquered Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob (Judges 1:31-32). Naphtali subjected the Canaanites of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath to forced labor (Judges 1:33). And in Dan's allotted land, Mount Heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim were still occupied by the Amorites (Judges 1:34-35). It was not until the time of David that the land was subjugated by the Israelites, and even during this time, the Philistines remained.

For many modern scholars, however, these biblical accounts of the Exodus and Conquest are simply myths created to rationalize theological beliefs. Within this anti-biblical perspective, scholars have suggested many theories to explain the emergence of the Israelite people in Canaan. This article focuses on a few of the more significant hypotheses: the peaceful infiltration model, the revolt model, the collapse model, and the cyclic model. Of these theories, only the peaceful infiltration model is an exogenous model, viewing Israel as entering from outside Canaan. The others are all endogenous models, proposing that the Israelites were formed in various ways from inhabitants within Canaan.

Even those scholars who support the biblical account of the Conquest are divided between a 13th and 15th century Exodus. Late date (13th century) supporters assert various dates between ca. 1240 and 1290 B.C., while most early date (15th century) advocates place the Exodus in 1446 B.C.[5] The theories concerning Israel's arrival in Canaan have been expounded upon in detail in many publications, so the sections that follow will focus on the most pertinent aspects of each model.

PEACEFUL INFILTRATION MODEL

THE peaceful infiltration model espoused by German scholars Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth and Israeli archaeologist Yohanan Aharoni envisages groups with diverse origins settling at different times in various areas of Canaan. Alt proposed that these nomadic groups peacefully immigrated to Canaan over a considerable length of time—maybe even a few centuries. In this model, only after the settlement of these disparate groups did they coalesce into the entity known as Israel. The infiltration theory relegates clashes with the Canaanites to a later stage in the process of Israel's formation. Though Alt first described the infiltration model, it was later supported and developed by Noth, who used literary-critical approaches to the text to reconstruct the complex process of tribal settlement. Noth saw the book of Joshua as an etiological tale—a myth told to justify the existence of customs, beliefs, or aspects of the natural world. Neither Alt nor Noth focused on the archaeological findings.

Although the infiltration theory does make use of specific biblical traditions, it clearly rejects the overall picture of Israel's origins found in the hexateuch.[6] The theory has been critiqued for a flawed portrayal of nomadic life.[7]

(PEASANT) REVOLT MODEL

GEORGE Mendenhall proposed this first endogenous model. He suggested that the nation of Israel was not formed from an outside Conquest but through an internal sociocultural revolution among native Canaanite peasants who sought to overthrow their political overlords, the rulers of the Late Bronze Age city-states. The catalyst for change did, however, begin with a population of outsiders: "A group of slave-labor captives succeeded in escaping an intolerable situation in Egypt. Without any other community upon which they could rely for protection and support, they established a relationship with a deity, Yahweh."[8] In Mendenhall's view, the influence of this small group of religious zealots encouraged some indigenous Canaanites to join them in their religious movement to overthrow the kings of the region and become part of this newly-formed community with "common loyalty to a single Overlord," which ultimately granted them "deliverance from bondage."[9] In this interpretation of the formation of Israel, the nation coalesced around a shared religion but not ethnicity as descendants of Abraham, as the biblical account describes.

Mendenhall acknowledged that his anthropological theory was an "ideal model" that lacked evidence but stood to reason because of parallel examples within other societies throughout world history.

He rejected the biblical texts' historicity because of the theological component, noting, "[t]his biblical emphasis on the 'acts of God' seems to modern man the very antithesis of history, for it is within the framework of economic, sociological and political organizations that we of today seek understanding of ourselves and consequently of ancient man."[10]

Scholars have expressed a great deal of criticism for the revolt theory. Some, like Niels Peter Lemche, have discussed the model's substantial lack of evidence and understanding of nomadic societies.[11] On Mendenhall's viewpoint of the biblical text, Provan, Long, and Longman note, "Reductionism, however, is a charge from which Mendenhall himself is not immune—both in his dismissal of the biblical evidence...and in his assumption that human understanding can and must be sought first and foremost in... 'economic, sociological, and political organizations.'"[12] Concerning Mendenhall's claim that Israel was a nation bound by religion and not ethnicity, Provan, Long, and Longman argue that "Mendenhall's insistence on the former to the exclusion of the latter seems unfounded and unnecessary" as "[t]here is nothing inherently improbable in the notion that Israel began as a family, which, as it grew, became the core into which other people were incorporated."[13]

COLLAPSE MODEL

ARCHAEOLOGIST William Dever has suggested that the Israelite nation emerged endogenously following a collapse of Canaanite civilization in the lowland region. Dever's theory relies on evidence of a shift between the Late Bronze Age (LB) and the Iron Age (IA) I period in which populations expanded in the mostly uninhabited hill country. He observes that "in the heartland of ancient Israel about 300 small agricultural villages were founded *de novo* in the late 13th-12th centuries."[14] According to Dever, archaeological findings of silos, cisterns, and hill terracing indicate that a group of rural Canaanites moved to the hill country.[15] Unlike Mendenhall, Dever sees these findings as well as the dearth of pig bones and temple structures as indications of the group's ethnic ties.[16] However, Dever does share Mendenhall's viewpoint that the larger group of indigenous Canaanites included a smaller group with Egyptian origins. Like most supporters of endogenous models Dever views the accounts of the Exodus and Conquest as myths. However, he does acknowledge that this connection to Egypt might signify some truth within the biblical texts, but views it as a distorted truth wrongly applied to "all Israel" when the larger group was comprised of native Canaanites.[17]

CYCLIC MODEL

ARCHAEOLOGIST Israel Finkelstein has also written extensively on the emergence of Israel. Like Dever, Finkelstein reinterprets the biblical text when it does not harmonize with his understanding of the archaeological evidence:

> Theoretically speaking, scholars can use two tools to decipher these riddles: text and archaeology. The importance of the biblical source, which dominated past research on the rise of Early Israel, has been dramatically diminished in recent years. The relatively late date of the text and/or its compilation—in the 7th century B.C.E and later—and its theological/ideological/political agenda, make it irrelevant as direct historical testimony. Of course, though it reflects the religious convictions and interests of people who lived centuries after the alleged events took place, some historical germs may be disguised in it.[18]

With scant evidence for his assertion, Finkelstein believes that the late date of the biblical text and/or its compilation (7th century B.C. and later) along with its theological, ideological, and political agenda make it "irrelevant as direct historical testimony."[19] Unlike Dever, Finkelstein does not believe that Israel emerged from societal collapse, rejecting the idea that their origin may be sought in the lowlands of Canaan. Instead, Finkelstein contends that "recent studies have shown beyond doubt that the lowland population had never reached close to a 'carrying capacity' point, and hence there were no land-hungry population surpluses eager to expand into new frontiers."[20] He further notes that the lowlands lack archaeological evidence of a surplus population that would necessitate moving elsewhere. Instead, he theorizes that the Iron Age I hill-country villages are indications of a period in which the people settled into agrarian life. In this period, natives alternated between subsistence on herding and farming, which spread over the course of many centuries. Finkelstein observes "plow-agriculture subsistence (more cattle) in the periods of settlement expansion—Middle Bronze (MB) II-III and Iron I—and pastoral oriented society (more sheep/goats) in the crisis years—Intermediate Bronze and Late Bronze Ages."[21] Finkelstein maintains that these shifts are not related to immigration of new cultural groups as "the material culture of these regions shows clear local features with no clue for large-scale migration of new groups from without."[22] For Finkelstein, this lack of a distinct material culture also precludes the idea that these Iron Age I highland settlers were ethnically distinct from the local Canaanites. He does note the

absence of pig bones, though, which he concedes may be an indication of a distinct ethnic group.[23]

Finkelstein's model presents serious concerns for some scholars. One major point of contention is his claim that Israelite culture should be recognizable due to distinct material evidence. In contrast, Richard S. Hess asserts that "material culture is distinctive to a particular region (i.e., the hill country), not necessarily to a particular ethnic group (e.g., Israelite rather than Canaanite)" and "the assumption that every ethnic group must have a distinct, archaeologically observable culture is not well founded."[24] Finkelstein himself has previously acknowledged as much:

> [T]he material culture of a given group of people mirrors the environment in which they live; their socio-economic conditions; the influence of neighboring cultures; the influence of previous cultures; in cases of migration, traditions which are brought from the country of origin; and equally important, their cognitive world.[25]

Provan, Long, and Longman point out that, "By these criteria, one would expect early Israel to have left little archaeological mark, except perhaps in terms of their 'traditions' and 'cognitive world,'" such as the tradition of a pig taboo.[26] Nevertheless, the revisionist picture painted by Dever and Finkelstein's deconstruction of the biblical text remains unproven and merely theoretical.

Biblical critics also take issue with Finkelstein's evaluation of the biblical texts. Provan, Long, and Longman argue that his claim on "the late datings of biblical texts, including Joshua and Judges are based upon unmerited pre-suppositions [that] build upon the minimalistic underpinnings of modern scholarship with the goal of invalidating the text's capacity to carry historical information" and that "theological slant need not vitiate the historical usefulness of the texts, so long as that slant is understood and allowance is made for it."[27]

CONQUEST MODEL

THIS model is aptly named for the Israelite's use of military force in conquering Canaan (see Numbers 32:20-22; Deuteronomy 2:5,9,19,24; Joshua 1:14; 10:40-42; 11:23; and 12:7, among many others). Although advocates of this model generally agree with the biblical account of Israel's Conquest, they are divided into two camps concerning the dating with most proponents supporting a "late" Conquest in the 13th century B.C. and a smaller group favoring an "early" 15th-century Conquest.

This divide began within the first few decades of archaeological work in Israel. John Garstang was one of the first archaeologists who conducted excavations at Jericho in the 1930s. His findings aligned with the biblical account of Joshua's siege of the city, including Canaanite pottery and large ash deposits from the LB IB/IIA horizon.[28] However, when Garstang's colleague Kathleen Kenyon took over the Jericho excavations in the 1950s, she concluded that evidence for the destruction of the city had occurred in 1550 B.C., 150 years before the purported arrival of the Israelites. Most within the scholarly community adopted Kenyon's analysis. At the time, some, like William Albright, had been searching for tell-tale signs of Conquest: destruction, a population surge, and evidence of a new—and in this case distinctly Israelite—culture. When the findings did not align with their expectations, those like James Hoffmeier[29] proposed that the Israelites must have arrived in the 13th-century B.C.[30] Despite the work of archaeologist Bryant Wood and Scott Stripling, which pointed out serious errors in Kenyon's dating and analysis processes, most modern scholars have not been deterred from unwavering support of her conclusions.

The Late Conquest Model (13th Century B.C.)

The late Conquest model is most closely attributed to American scholar William F. Albright and his disciple, Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin. Many other archaeologists have also adopted this viewpoint including the excavators of Hazor and Gezer, Amnon Ben-Tor and

(cont. on p. 116)

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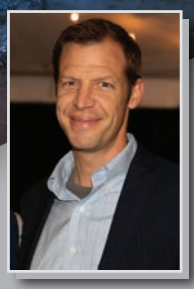

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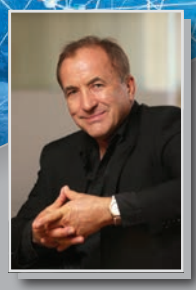

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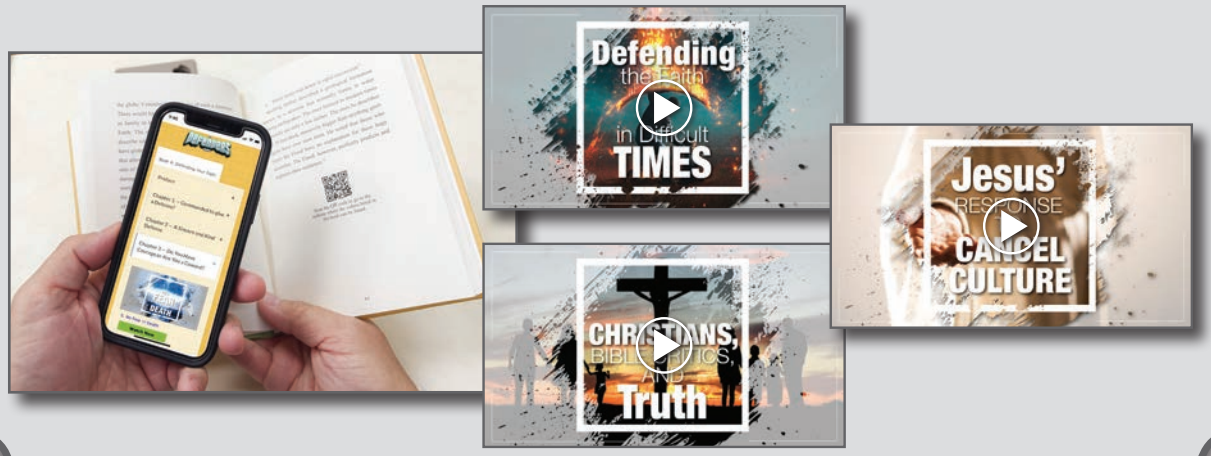

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Steve Ortiz respectively, and Egyptologists Kenneth Kitchen and James Hoffmeier. Many of the late date supporters have attempted to align the Israelite's arrival (and the Bible itself) with archaeological evidence dated to the 13th century B.C. G. Ernest Wright, for instance, concludes that "the manifold evidence for the terrific destruction suffered by the cities of Bethel, Lachish, Eglon, Debir, and Hazor during the 13th century certainly suggests that a planned campaign such as that depicted in Joshua 10-11 was carried out."[31] This dating, however, does not align with the dates outlined in Scripture. First Kings 6:1 is often referenced as an explicit piece of textual evidence concerning the dating of the Exodus: "Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel…he began to build the house of the Lord." The year Solomon began construction on the Temple is commonly recognized as 966-967 B.C.[32] Basic addition then places the Exodus at 1446 B.C. and the Conquest at 1406 B.C. To account for this discrepancy, Wright suggests that the 480 years must not be literal years but a figurative number representing 12 generations of 40 years each. He then explains that 40 was an idealized number and that generations were more likely 20-25 years long, which means that Solomon's fourth year occurred around 300 years after the Exodus, and the Israelite's arrived in Canaan around 1270 B.C. Another piece of textual evidence often discussed is Judges 11:26 in which Jephthah states that Israel had been living in Canaan for 300 years: "While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time?" Using the Solomonic date as a starting point and tracing back the time periods recorded for David, Saul, Samuel, Eli, and the judges, Jephthah likely lived in the early 11th century,[33] again placing the Israelites already in Canaan by the 14th century—long before the supposed Exodus championed by late date advocates.

For many scholars, the 13th-century Conquest model presents several concerns. The foremost of these problems for biblically minded researchers is misinterpretation of the biblical text in both overanalyzing (by hypothesizing figurative interpretations to justify the dating conflict with 1 Kings) and under-analyzing (by disregarding crucial details concerning Joshua's account of the Conquest). In response to the figurative explanation of the 40-year generations, Wood observes that such an interpretation has no precedent or parallel elsewhere in the Bible. Forty years is often seen as a typical period in biblical texts, though not challenged as being literal elsewhere.[34] As for issues of insufficient analysis, advocates have assumed that a militaristic takeover must have involved widespread destruction of cities in Canaan. On the contrary, the book of Joshua simply lists 31 Canaanite kings who were "defeated" (Joshua 12:7-24), without any reference to the destruction of property. The only exceptions are three burned cities—Jericho, Ai, and Hazor.[35] While it would be logical to search for evidence of destruction in these three cities, as Provan, Long, and Longman aptly state, "to insist on wide-scale destruction in Canaan as evidence of an Israelite Conquest is a misguided quest based on misread texts."[36]

Those who have completely discounted the historicity of the Israelite Conquest, such as Finkelstein and Silberman, state that "archaeology has uncovered a dramatic discrepancy between the Bible and the situation within Canaan at the suggested date of the conquest, between 1230 and 1220 B.C.E."[37] This may be entirely correct—that the account of the Israelite Conquest under Joshua is quite different than the archaeological picture of Canaan near the end of the 13th century B.C. The reason for this is that if a series of events is considered to be partially historical, and the search for supporting evidence is sought in the wrong time period or geographical location, then the correct data will not be discovered. As a result, this lack of evidence or incorrect data will then be added, as it has been, to the argument that the events are unhistorical or partially historical at best. If a series of events is assumed to be unhistorical because of earlier interpretation errors, then any data that may relate to it will not be associated with the supposed mythical event. Thus, when new data comes to light, it has minimal chance of being evaluated as relevant to the Israelite Conquest because of the *a priori* assumption that any possible data must fit a 13th-century B.C. Conquest theory or a no Conquest theory. Conversely, if a series of events written of in antiquity and passed on is examined at face value and allowed the possibility of being historically accurate, relevant archaeological and historical data may be discovered and applied.

The Early Conquest Model (15th Century B.C.)

On the other side of the argument, the number of archaeologists who regard the Israelite Conquest as an historical event beginning in ca. 1400 B.C. has dwindled since the 1950s. Garstang believed the evidence pointed to an Israelite Conquest beginning in ca. 1400 B.C.[38] More recently, Wood and

Scott Stripling are among the few archaeologists currently excavating in Israel and Palestine arguing for an historical Israelite Conquest beginning in ca. 1400 B.C.[39] This is a view that has not sufficiently been addressed with the volume of new archaeological evidence uncovered in recent decades. Though secular archaeologists like Finkelstein continue to assert that the evidence for the historical Conquest of Canaan by the Israelites is weak, Finkelstein and Silberman importantly note that archaeological data can clarify history:

> Did the conquest of Canaan really happen? Is this central saga of the Bible—and of the subsequent history of Israel—history, or myth? Despite the fact that the ancient cities of Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, Lachish, Hazor, and nearly all the others mentioned in the conquest story have been located and excavated, the evidence for a historical conquest of Canaan by the Israelites is, as we will see, weak. Here too, archaeological evidence can help disentangle the events of history from the powerful images of an enduring biblical tale.[40]

This question of whether the Conquest of Canaan really happened can help us add evidence that supports the historical reliability of the Bible, and to do this the archaeological evidence related to the Conquest must be impartially explored. As more sites have been excavated and as more previously excavated sites have been re-examined, evidence has mounted in favor of a 15th century Exodus/Conquest. Among the sites of the Conquest referred to in Scripture, all have been previously excavated by those who either hold a late date Exodus or no Exodus at all, but with closer examination of these sites with fresh eyes and new technology, serious discrepancies have arisen. With a more comprehensive library and knowledge of Late Bronze Age pottery along with new and better techniques in excavation, time will tell if more scholars and archaeologists will be willing to let go of firmly held dogma that have influenced generations of thought leaders in biblical archaeology. [NOTE: We plan to explore many of these evidences in future articles.]

CONCLUSION

THE debate among the scholarly community concerning these Conquest models underscores the problem of interpretation errors and binary reasoning that leads to faulty conclusions that often suppress alternative approaches. To summarize the issues concisely (albeit imperfectly), many archaeologists and historians who believe in at least part of the biblical Conquest have either sought evidence in the wrong time or at the wrong site leading to erroneous and or confusing conclusions.

It is our contention that making something out of nothing in archaeology is poor methodology. Thus, finding nothing is nothing, not something.

The methodology of minimalist archaeologists[41] is chiefly based on the false assumption that archaeology is completely objective without any prejudices or assumptions. In fact, many of these secularists sustain their "factual" propositions using "negative" evidence. This "nothing" evidence has been called "silent" evidence by Amihai Mazar,[42] while Miller calls it "negative archaeological evidence."[43] Miller perfectly illustrates the fallacy of thinking that interpretation and evidence are one and the same: "If the Bible and archaeology are to be correlated vis-à-vis the conquest, the claims of the biblical account will have to be modified in some fashion and/or some of the archaeological evidence will have to be explained away."[44]

It is our contention that making something out of nothing in archaeology is poor methodology. **Thus, finding nothing is nothing, not something**. David Merling notes that "to assume that one has disproved a specific point of ancient literary account because one does not know of, or cannot find any evidence of, its historicity, is a historical fallacy. To admit that one has found nothing is only proof that one has found nothing."[45]

Although many skeptics and Bible critics have raised doubts about the historicity of the Bible, their challenges may not be evidence of incongruities or fabrications within the biblical account. Rather, it is evidence of presuppositional bias against the biblical date. The Bible should be treated like any other ancient source, but unfortunately it often is not. Biblical texts are commonly rejected as tendentious, theological, and ideological, while ancient non-biblical texts, which are tendentious, theological, and ideological, escape the "hermeneutics of suspicion" and are readily accepted without question as historical evidence.[46] Finally, there could not be a better illustration of post-modern self-absorption than to assume that ancient writers **would** or **could** leave the evidence for which scholars seek or else they are justified in concluding that those stories are fiction. As Merling points out, in many places the biblical writers provided us precious little detail, but instead recorded what was necessary to convey their message.[47] It was not their objective to write what their

future audience needed in order to "prove" their point.

In truth, at the heart of the debate over the historicity of the Conquest is the question of the Bible's inspiration and, therefore, reliability. Can the Bible truly be trusted? Is it really a product of the mind of God? A preponderance of evidence is available to substantiate the inspiration of Scripture.[48] The Conquest, therefore, happened, and yet the claims of many leaders in the archaeological community over the past several decades have caused many to reject the Bible's inspiration without further investigation into its many proofs.

Archaeology and Apologetics

Postmodernism and biblical minimalism constitute a dangerous cocktail that, if left unchecked, will result in the disintegration of the very foundation of the Christian faith, casting doubt upon the truth of Scripture in the minds of many. Like Darwinian evolution, this approach to history and the Bible has become the "enlightened" and "scholarly" approach touted in universities, seminaries, and schools of higher learning across the world. It is imperative for the Church today to defend the veracity and historicity of Scripture and continue to reach the lost through the Gospel. While there are several tools at our disposal to defend God's Word, archaeology is one of the most powerful. Though many today use archaeology to seed doubt in the historical reliability of Scripture, the material evidence continues to mount in favor of the amazing accuracy and truthfulness of the Bible.

Without a doubt, archaeology together with a proper reading of the biblical text can quickly silence the minimalist agenda. With a profound number of new and exciting archaeological discoveries over the last 20 years, it is our view that biblical revisionism and extreme minimalism will eventually crumble under the weight of the accumulating archaeological data being discovered in Israel. In the meantime, those of us who are serious about the historical reliability of the Bible must equip ourselves with the evidence so we can properly handle the questions and doubts that may arise and stand up to those who seek to undermine our faith.

ENDNOTES

[1] Eliezer D. Oren (1998), "Opening Remarks," in *The Origin of Early Israel—Current Debate: Biblical, Historical and Archaeological Perspectives: Irene Levi-Sala Seminar, 1997*, ed. Shmuel Aituv and Eliezer D. Oren (London: Institute of Archaeology, Institute of Jewish Studies, University College), p. 1.

[2] By "revisionists," we mean those who compromise or distort biblical or historical truth in order to uphold a secular, modern theology or agenda.

[3] William G. Dever (2018), "Hershel's Crusade, No. 2: For King and Country: Chronology and Minimalist," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 44[2].

[4] Lorenzo Nigro (2020), "Sapienza, The Italian-Palestinian Expedition to Tell es-Sultan, Ancient Jericho (1997-2015): Archaeology and Valorisation of Material and Immaterial Heritage," in *Digging Up Jericho Past, Present and Future*, ed. Rachael Thyrza Sparks, Bill Finlayson, Bart Wagemakers and Josef Mario Briffa (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology), p. 202.

[5] For the latest research, see *Five Views on the Exodus: Historicity, Chronology, and Theological Implications* (2021), ed. Mark D. Janzen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic).

[6] i.e., the first six books of the Old Testament.

[7] K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (1999), "Early Israel in Recent Biblical Scholarship," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, ed. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Baker), pp. 180-181.

[8] George E. Mendenhall (1962), "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *Biblical Archaeology*, 25[3]:73-74.

[9] Ibid., p. 74.

[10] Ibid., p. 66.

[11] Niels Peter Lemche (1985), "Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy," *Vetus Testamentum, Supplements* (Leiden: E.J. Brill), p. 37.

[12] Iain Provan, V. Phillips Long, and Tremper Longman III (2015), *A Biblical History of Israel*, second edition (Louisville: West Minster John Knox Press), p. 196.

[13] Ibid., p. 196.

[14] William G. Dever (2001), *What Did the Biblical Writers Know, and When Did They Know It?: What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), p. 110.

[15] William Dever (1992), "Israel, History of (Archaeology and the 'Conquest')," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 3, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday), p. 548.

[16] Ibid., pp. 549-550.

[17] Dever (2001), p. 121.

[18] Israel Finkelstein (1998), "The Rise of Early Israel: Archaeology and Long-Term History," in *The Origin of Early Israel—Current Debate: Biblical, Historical and Archaeological Perspectives: Irene Levi-Sala Seminar, 1997*, ed. Shmuel Aituv and Eliezer D. Oren (London: Institute of Archaeology, Institute of Jewish Studies, University College), pp. 9-10.

[19] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[20] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[21] Ibid., p. 26.

[22] Ibid., p. 25.

[23] Ibid., p. 16.

[24] Richard S. Hess (1993), "Early Israel in Canaan: A Survey of Recent Evidence and Interpretations," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 125:129-130.

[25] Finkelstein (1998), p. 16.

[26] Provan, Long, and Longman (2015), p. 146.

[27] Ibid., p. 200.

[28] John Garstang (1941), "The Story of Jericho: Further Light on the Biblical Narrative," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 58[4]:368-372.

[29] James K. Hoffmeier (2021), "Late Date: A Historical Exodus in the Thirteenth Century BC," in *Five Views on the Exodus: Historicity, Chronology, and Theological Implications*, ed. Mark D. Janzen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic). He notes that "If one limits biblical chronology to 1 Kings 6:1 (480 years from Solomon's third year [967 B.C.] back to the exodus) and Judges 11:26 (300 years since arrival of Israelite settlers in Transjordan), then a fifteenth-century date seems obvious." As Hoffmeier does not accept a straightforward reading of the text, he believes that early date advocates hyperbolize the 480th

year mentioned in 1 Kings 6:1 despite the fact that the 1446 B.C. date remarkably synchronizes with other biblical passages and archaeological evidence.

[30] Bryant G. Wood (2005), "The Rise and Fall of the 13th Century Exodus-Conquest Theory," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48[3]:475, September.

[31] G. Ernest Wright (1962), *Biblical Archaeology*, new and rev. ed. (London: Gerald Duckworth), p. 84.

[32] For an in-depth defense of this date, see Rodger C. Young (2003), "When Did Solomon Die?," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 46[4]:589-603.

[33] Although it is difficult to calculate precise dates for Jephthah, various scholars have estimated the beginning of his judgeship to be ca. 1100 B.C. So, the inference is that the tribe of Reuben had been occupying the land from the Wadi Hesban to the Arnon River since ca. 1400 B.C. By adding another 40 years for the wilderness wandering, this leaves a date of approximately 1440 B.C for the exodus. This area was conquered in the last year of the wilderness period, just months before the entry into the land. If the conquest of this area, therefore, was late 1406 B.C., 300 years later would be 1106 B.C. This time reference, along with the one in 1 Kings 6:1, again suggests that the Exodus took place about 1446 B.C. rather than about 1280 B.C. Advocates of the 1280 B.C. date of the Exodus usually take the 300 years as a round number indicating several generations, as they also interpret 1 Kings 6:1, or as a total of overlapping periods. See also Kenneth A. Kitchen and T. C. Mitchell, "Chronology of the Old Testament," *New Bible Dictionary*, pp. 186-193.

[34] For example, the duration of the Flood in (Genesis 7:4,12) was 40 days; Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years (Exodus 16:35); and the reigns of both David and Solomon were each 40 years long (1 Kings 2:11; 11:42).

[35] See Joshua 6:24 for Jericho, Joshua 8:28 for Ai, and Joshua 11:11,13 for Hazor.

[36] Provan, Long, and Longman (2015), p. 140. Note that, according to Deuteronomy 6:10-11, when the Israelites conquered Canaan, they would inherit cities, wells, vineyards, and olive trees, implying that many areas of Canaan would not be decimated.

[37] Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman (2002), *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Ancient Texts* (New York: Simon & Schuster), p. 76.

[38] Garstang (1941), pp. 368-372.

[39] Bryant G. Wood (March-April 1990a), "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A New Look at the Archaeological Evidence," *Biblical Archaeological Review*, 16[2]:44-58; Scott Stripling (2021), "The Early Date: The Exodus Took Place in the Fifteenth Century BC," in *Five Views on the Exodus: Historicity, Chronology, and Theological Implications*, ed. Mark D. Janzen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic).

[40] Finkelstein and Silberman (2002), p. 73.

[41] Biblical minimalists argue that the Bible is not a reliable guide to ancient Israelite history and that, in fact, the concept of "Israel" itself is historically dubious. Lemche exemplifies this dogma when he notes, "The Israelite nation as explained by the biblical writers has little in the way of a historical background. It is a highly ideological construct created by ancient scholars of Jewish tradition in order to legitimize their own religious community and its religio-political claims on land and religious exclusivity." See Niels Lemche (1998), *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Westminster: John Knox Press), pp. 165-166.

[42] Amihai Mazar (1992), *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 BCE* (New York: Doubleday), p. 281.

[43] J.M. Miller (1977), "Archaeology and the Israelite Conquest of Canaan: Some Methodological Observations," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 109:88.

[44] Ibid., p. 88.

[45] David Merling (2004), "The Relationship Between Archaeology and the Bible," in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans), p. 34.

[46] James K. Hoffmeier (2005), *Ancient Israel in Sinai; The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 20-21.

[47] Merling (2004), p. 237.

[48] Kyle Butt (2022), *Is the Bible God's Word?* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

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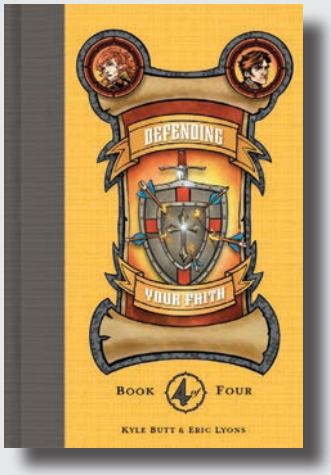
NOTE FROM The Editor

AP's Newest Book for Teens

In the past three years, the Lord has blessed AP with the opportunity to publish three new teen books: *Defending God*, *Defending the Bible*, and *Defending Jesus*. These 13-chapter, approximate 180-page hardback books have been very well received. Young people in Christian homes and churches around the country have been immersing themselves in this Defenders material as they equip themselves with the knowledge and tools to defend the Truth. Now, they can read and study the final book in this series: *Defending Your Faith*.



In a day when the authority of God's Word is continually questioned, when the Messiah is increasingly mocked, and when biblical values are constantly under attack, we need Christians of all ages to allow God's light to shine through us in word and deed. And we want to help young people to know that just as God has used young Joseph, David, and Mary in times past, He wants today's youth to prepare themselves to be used by Him in ways that honor the King of kings.

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